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ABSTRACT

Describing the development of Rocky Boy Reservation's American Indian controlled elementary school, this paper addresses the following: Background (the Bureau of Indian Affairs day school era prior to 1960 and the transition in 1970 to a tribally controlled elementary school); Philosophy (equal emphasis on Chippewa-Cree and U.S. culture; parental, student, and community involvement; locally developed and designed curricula; individualized instruction, including study of tribal culture and government and the immediate environment); Program Description (physical education and recreation programs and a history research project funded via Title IV of the Indian Education Act of 1972; remedial reading and home school coordinator programs funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; and a bilingual program); Governance (support by the state of Montana for local control; an all Indian Board of Trustees; and role clarification for the superintendent, principal, and school board members); Financing (a $1,000,000 budget supported by a 25% Federal contribution under Public Law 874, categorical Federal grants, limited state funds, and no tax effort); Staffing Problems (development of a locally based teacher education program to counter the problems of isolated geographic location and poorly prepared Anglo teachers); Effects of Indian Control (enhanced self images and greater participation producing a model school). (JC)

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Rocky Boy's Elementary School
Rocky Boy, Montana

Presented by

James Davis
The Pennsylvania State University
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ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Rocky Boy's Elementary School
Rocky Boy, Montana

Introduction

The Chippewa-Cree Indian Reservation (commonly known as Rocky Boy's Reservation) located in Northcentral Montana, about 30 miles south of Havre and 120 miles northeast of Great Falls, was created by executive order in 1916. As a recently established reservation with a sizeable land base, its educational system has survived some major changes, the most recent of which has brought about more involvement of the local Indian community as decision and policy-makers. Presently, Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation has an enrolled tribal membership of approximately 2,200 people with about 1,800 actually residing within or adjacent to the reservation. There are about 600 school age children who attend either on or off-reservation schools.

The data and sources of information used in this paper are the result of my two years serving as principal of the Rocky Boy's school system. Additional sources were obtained from journals, textbooks, state and tribal constitutions.

Background

Previous to 1960, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) housed within the United States Department of the Interior operated conventional day schools on the reservation. During the BIA era these schools were called elementary day schools. Students beyond the elementary level attended public high schools located adjacent to the reservation (Box Elder or Havre) or off-reservation BIA and parochial boarding schools. In the case of Rocky Boy's, boarding schools are located great distances from the parents home and often out of the

State. Examples of such schools include Flandreau, South Dakota; Stephan and Marty Mission, South Dakota (both former Catholic boarding schools for Indians); Chilocco, Oklahoma; Chemawa, Oregon; and Haskell in Lawrence, Kansas. Some forty to fifty students from the Rocky Boy's Reservation are today attending one or the other of the boarding schools.

After the 1959-1960 school year the education system on the Rocky Boy's Reservation was integrated into Havre School District 16-A which was at that time, and still is, predominantly a white community of 18,000 people. For a ten year period, 1960-1970, education of Indian youth who resided on the reservation was administered primarily by an all non-Indian administration in the sense that no Indian was on the Havre school board during that period. Little, if any, input was ever asked of the Indian parent. Although some elementary and most all secondary students from the reservation attend either the Havre or Box Elder schools through bussing of some 30-70 miles per day, the majority of the elementary students (grades kindergarten through six) attended the Rocky Boy's Elementary School which was then under District 16-A's jurisdiction.

Unhappy with the education their children were receiving under School District 16-A, a group of tribal members along with a few non-enrolled Indians in 1967 petitioned the Hill County Superintendent of Schools for a realignment of Public School District 16-A boundaries which would provide, if approved, for a separate and independent elementary public school district composed of land within the exterior boundaries of the reservation. This initial request was denied. Having perseverance they again gathered forces in 1968 and introduced a similar petition to the County Superintendent of Schools. This time the Havre Board of Education, with regard to this request, appointed an advisory committee of Indian parents who would assist them on this matter of

Indian concern. After many hours of hearings and testimony the request for a separate and independent elementary public school district was approved in March 1970 by the County Superintendents of schools and sanctioned by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Tribal Council also approved this plan through a resolution. As state school law required at that time concerning a newly created district and the need for a board of trustees, the County Superintendent of Schools appointed five Indian members to a board to act and serve on a staggered term basis until the first school board election which would be held in April 1971.

To assure a smooth transition from School District 16-A to School District 87 and Indian control, a group of parents incorporated as the Rocky Boy's Committee, Inc., which gave them a legal basis to solicit funds from various federal agencies and private foundations. Because of the time of the year, the school would not be able to apply for state financing of education for the start of the 1970-1971 school year. To cover this interim period the Rocky Boy's Committee was able to acquire some financing from the United States Office of Economic Opportunity and a private foundation. With this they were able to survive until funds from two federal sources, Public Law 81-874 and the Johnson O'Malley Act, became available. Public Law 81-874 in 1950 was enacted to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies in areas affected by Federal activities. Indian children qualify a district for P.L. 874 funds under Sections 3a and 3b of the Act. Section 3a applies to children whose parents live and work on Federal property, and Section 3b applies to children whose parents either live on Federal property or work on Federal property, but not both.[1] The Johnson O'Malley Act was enacted in 1934 for the purpose of providing Federal financial assistance to states to enable them to educate eligible Indian children in local public school systems. Funds are allocated under two major categories--general support and special programs.[2]

Signaling the beginning of another new educational era the Indian people on the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation assumed control of their elementary educational system for the first time. In 1972, school board chairman Dorothy Small explained: "The principle benefits of the new school system have been its flexibility, emphasis on individual instruction, heavy reliance on Cree-speaking teachers aides, attention to Cree language and culture, and its attempts to create a body of teaching materials in Cree."[3] What may also be indicated here is that the system has facilitated a means of allowing people to speak out and thus afford them the opportunity to express their feelings in terms of change and improvement in the educational programs of the school.

Philosophy

The general philosophy of the Rocky Boy's Elementary School is to give equal emphasis to American culture and the Chippewa-Cree culture; to focus on a curriculum of traditional academic skills while also paying particular attention to giving the children experiences through the use of locally developed and designed curriculum; and to prepare young Indian children for the world of work through the use of individualized instruction for all curriculum, including the study of culture, the governmental structure of the tribe and the immediate environment.

Local parental involvement also plays an active part in this philosophy and was initially encouraged through the development of an alternative educational system based on a "modified concept" with a degree of overlapping by the "open concept." What this entails, as explained by Mario Fantini ('973), is the opening of a school to the community and its resources; the flexibility of prescribed curriculum content through individualized

instruction; the school as an ungraded system; the use of team teaching; and the differentiated approach in planning by teachers to the same content.[4] Litnak and Meyer (1974) would view this school type as being within the "open door" position which represents the view that many important educational activities take place in the family and the community, and these processes influence and interact with the methods and goals of the school.[5] Adherence to this point of view has produced a close relationship between the community and school. The school is the center of all activities for the community. Thus, a humanistic approach to education is evident offering parent and student involvement which is necessary for an improved school-community kinship.

Program Description

Integration into the Havre school district in 1960 did not provide for a feeling that each individual was an integral and worthwile member of the school and community. Thus, the Chippewa-Cree tribe inherited a school system which had previously made little effort to understand or provide educational programs and curricula meaningful and germane to their children. During the early years of institutional control people recognized that the learning of basic skills was important but that the basic individual values of respect and honesty were also important. In order to learn the skills demanded by a wider society, the individual must first build on the skills of his immediate environment while acknowledging and learning that respect of one's self, of others and the values of honesty are all part of the process. Therefore, reform of the educational system at Rocky Boy's did not seek to totally ignore or totally modify the old system. They sought only to alter it so to meet the unique and individual differences of children and adults.

In planning for educational, social, and recreational programs, the school board and administration have submitted supportive education proposals to federal agencies which deal with the education of Indian children. Title IV of the Indian Education Act of 1972 presently makes funds available to Rocky Boy's School for two separate programs. One project deals specifically with the physical education and community recreation program. In addition to providing for a physical education instructor, this source of funding has provided for an organized after-school and weekend schedule of activities for adults and students of the reservation. Through this program the educational institution has become more involved with the everyday life of the child. This has helped to provide a stronger link between the educational program (the school), its staff, and the family and community. Because most students have difficulty finding transportation to and from activities, the Rocky Boy's School provides this to all students on an equal basis. The other project under the Indian Education Act finances a history research project which has as its major goal to write and publish a history textbook of the Chippewa and Cree Tribes. This publication will be utilized in the classroom with the purpose of serving as the main source of actual occurrences and of information concerning the history and culture of the two tribes. Presently, as well as during the past 2 1/2 years, a large number of tribal cultural informants and historians have been utilized to do basic research of this sort and for translation of information from Cree to English and vice-versa. Research has been done in a large number of libraries and archives throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. To supplement this history textbook, a comprehensive annotated bibliography on the Chippewa and Cree Tribes is being published by the school district. Over 3,000 entries have been accumulated which will go into this document eventually serving staff,

students, the entire community, and other people who have a desire to read or do research on the two tribes.

While the school staff embodies much of the technical expertise in terms of production and lay-out of information as well as within curriculum development and instructional methods, the community has available and has offered other facilities, resources, and knowledge that can and do assist tremendously in sustaining the school's purpose and goals. Tribal facilities are available and are often utilized when the school is in need of additional space such as in the case of teacher inservice training and social and recreational facilities for students. This arrangement poses no problem since the Tribe owns a large multi-purpose building which also has small classrooms available for small group conferences and/or instruction.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act funds a remedial reading and a home-school coordinator program for the school. Students who are diagnosed by teachers via teacher-made tests, student academic reports, parental input, and to some degree through the use of standardized achievement tests are referred to the Title I remedial reading program for technical consultation and instruction on a one-to-one or small group basis. The Home-School Coordinator is responsible for bridging the communications gap between the parent and the school. Parent meetings are held on an informal and formal basis with teachers and staff. Weekly reports are reviewed concerning progress and problems of each child.

The bilingual program, as I referred to earlier, plays a very important role in the purpose and goals of the school. It is felt by most people that only through programs which affords self-confidence and self-respect will students become more interested in attending school. Parents also feel that although relevant curriculum is important to achieving educational goals and

objectives for their children, the curriculum is only as good as the teacher presenting it. Therefore, it is of vital importance that teachers become culturally sensitive to Indian children. To compensate for some of these deficiencies the bilingual program staff has provided Native language instruction to all staff members during a one-hour period each week. This became school board policy in 1975 and was based on the belief that the entire school staff, through positive interaction with students, are key figures in determining a child's self-concept. Additionally, teachers are required to remain in their classrooms while Native language instruction is being offered to the students. In this manner, teachers have the opportunity to learn to speak the Native language and become more familiar with its use and importance in the classroom. Generally, the basis on which teacher assistants are selected to positions with the school district is their interest and/or present ability to speak the Native language since a number of students do enter the Rocky Boy's School as predominantly Native speakers with very little of an English language background. Other students are bilingual while approximately thirty percent of the students are monolingual-English language speakers.

The recent structural addition to the elementary school has provided the teaching staff with a variety of options in terms of space utilization. With the adding of grades seven and eight the structure was built to initially accommodate the "open concept" mode of instruction. Although this concept of instruction has not been implemented, individualized instruction using the multi-media approach has been the favorite mode for instruction. Parents, in a response to a questionnaire to individualization, have endorsed this mode of instruction and wish to see it continued. Team teaching also occurs at various times throughout the week to provide for teachers to teach in their speciality. Teacher preparation occurs while students are in physical education,

art, and during library periods. More planning and preparation time is afforded all teachers when their assistants are able to take over the class for specific purposes or under certain conditions.

Inservice and preservice education and sensitivity training sessions are two very critical areas for a school such as Rocky Boy. With immediate access to Northern Montana College, the college has provided graduate or undergraduate credit for most inservice training sessions held at the Rocky Boy's School. Training sessions are written and taught in such a manner so as to satisfy college requirements in offering credit. Technical consultants are utilized which include many local resource personnel who are hired or required by their employers to serve as instructors for these inservice training sessions. The resultant outputs occurs when students benefit from a better trained teacher in the classroom who is more sensitive to their needs. Teachers acquire the one or two credits which are available through these course offerings, thus improving their professional credentials and capabilities. The trustees and administration feels it important enough that the district often pays for the credits offered to the teachers and assistants. The only disadvantage of this service to teachers is that, as mentioned earlier, teachers do not remain with the school long enough to have a continuous and lasting effect upon the students. With the turn-over rate continuing as it has been over the past few years there is the need to provide this service from year to year. But, once local Indians and non-Indian teachers are placed into these positions there will not be the need to provide the same sensitivity training sessions year after year. When this occurs, a complete cycle of self-determination will exist and those Indian teachers and Indian administrators will be the ones to conceptualize the true meaning of Indian education.

Governance

In response to control of education at the local level the State Department of Public Instruction has in the past reiterated the position of the State of Montana and of the public education system that education, policy, and philosophy should be controlled at the local level. In recognition of education among American Indians, Article X, Section I, of the Montana Constitution which is entitled "Educational Goals and Duties" states: "The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians and is committed to its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity."[6] This places American Indians in a unique position in relation to the goals of the state and the preservation of their culture and traditions as a people. By virtue of the state's position relative to local control of education, this also provides for Indian people to control their educational system as has been the case with non-Indian school districts for many years. Furthermore, the Constitution of the Chippewa-Cree Tribe, in Article 6, Section 1 mandates that said Tribal Council encourage and foster the arts, crafts, culture, and traditions of the Tribe.[7] The strength of the above statements by Montana's and the Chippewa-Cree Tribe's Constitution and by the State Department of Public Instruction has encouraged the Chippewa-Cree people to take advantage of the opportunity to foster these aspects of local control of education and the preservation of their culture and traditions.

Presently, the Board of Trustees of School District #87 is composed of an all-Indian membership who are either Chippewa and/or Cree Indian. All members can be considered "traditional" Indian oriented in that they are, some more than others, involved in various tribal ceremonies and activities throughout the year. Of the five members, one has a college degree (a

graduate of the locally based teacher training program) while the other four members have either formally graduated from high school and may have some education beyond this level, or they have less than a formal high school education. Yet the lack of formal years of education does not appear to seriously limit their ability to function as a board member. Considering the average educational level of the board verses the entire Indian adult population of the reservation, it now appears that the board is better educated in a formal sense. If one considered this during the earlier years of local control this would not be the case. Probably due to the "traditional" characteristics of the board members, no member of the board can be considered economically and/or financially secure. Three of the five members are housewives with the other two employed by the Tribe.

During school board meetings it is not unusual for the members to speak in their Native tongue. It has been my experiences and observations as principal of the school that the board of this district consider their roles as very important to the future of their people. The board must be considered as one which is community oriented with a low friction function. They view their roles as contributors to the best interest of the school and all the children in the community. This board works as a unit in which most decisions are ultimately decided unanimously. While in attendance at many of the board meetings, the main topic was one which centered around the students. Questions are asked and responded to in terms of what is best for the children and how it may or may not affect the children attending the school. This attitude is created through the social relationship between the community and the board which rests upon a mutual understanding rather than on conflict. In the works of Howard Becker,[8] 1950, and his classifications of communities along a sacred to secular continuum, the Rocky Boy's community can be classified as

a "sacred community" in which the old ways are treated better than the new and that the differences from traditional patterns of behavior may be the start of a road away from which there is no turning back. When one looks at the majority of Indian reservations in the country today and especially those who have retained most of the traditional ways of life, it is not hard to understand why it is a sacred community. Conversely, the board in many instances must be viewed as a "secular board" in that they have placed a certain amount of positive value on change itself. They have realized that in order for their children to benefit from an education, change from the conventional methods of instruction and the middle-class white curriculum to more advanced, innovative, and relevant methods must be developed and operationalized. The board, from my observations, view themselves as a secular unit because they view their job as a moral commitment and as a value of achievement for the benefit of children, and that the future is important to their survival as a people. How is it that the board can be considered secular while the community is considered sacred? Basically, it is due to the positive social relationship between the board and the community in which they both have the understanding that education, a bicultural education, is important to their survival. From my experiences in other school districts, this type of board and community composition has not always been discernible for quite often the relationship between board and community was of a type based on self-interest with interests involving specific areas.

Clarification of roles between the board and the superintendent has been achieved through an unwritten policy which consists of a mutual understanding with respect to the purpose and goals of the school. The board has always played the key role in the formulation of policy and purpose which has included the requirements for a bilingual-bicultural education; pre and

inservice training for teachers and supporting staff; approval of administrative recommendations for hire and dismissal of staff; approval of expenditures by the district; purchase of textbooks and curricula materials; and policy on community use of school facilities. Although the superintendent and principal have not traditionally had specific job requirements set down through job descriptions, they have functioned in a manner which has allowed for flexibility. Therefore, the superintendent and in various instances the principal have seldom remained out of policy decisions made by the board. In fact the past superintendents have had a great deal of influence on the policy and decision-making processes of the school district. They have not only supplied information to the board but have recommended policy, have made decisions and determined for them what policy should entail based on their experiences and expertise as an administrator. In many instances the superintendent's decision was influenced by the staff and parents since there has always been the feeling that those working with and responsible for the children should have a voice in the policy formulation and decision-making processes.

Financing

The planning and involvement that evolved from the creation of the new district began with questions such as: What kind of school system do we want to provide for our children? Do we want to simply acknowledge that we are managing and have control of our school? Do we want to do something which is not only unique and innovative, but more importantly, relevant and purposeful? Or, as Goodlad once questioned regarding the issue in providing alternatives in education: For what shall we educate and how shall we educate? With relevancy and purposefulness in mind the newly appointed Board

of Trustees and the new administration (both the superintendent and principal were Indian) began to design a comprehensive program which would eventually and hopefully meet the academic, cultural, social, economic, and recreational needs of the community's student and adult population. With the difficult task of financing such programs, proposals were written and submitted to state, federal and private sources of funding. With the basic objective of developing a bicultural education, a grant from the Federal Government was received and with this the foundation for beginning their school was set in motion.

During the last few years the school has operated with a budget in the neighborhood of $1,000,000. Support for the general operation of the school comes from Public Law 874 which had traditionally contributed roughly 25% of the total budget. Outside the general fund which brings in about $800 per child, there are additional budget items which cover transportation, retirement, insurances, social security, and adult education. Categorical aid is the primary type of federal aid which is received by the Rocky Boy's School on a project basis. By statute this type of aid is characterized as grant money since the federal money is provided in advance of the actual expenditure by the district. Most types of federal aid do not fall within the fund-earmarked category and must be managed by the local district.

Despite the fact that state funds are limited and the local tax effort for school operations is nil, and in view of the fact that the Federal Government is not legally responsible for the financing of Indian education within the public school system, the legal responsibility, as it has been in the past, will rest with the state to finance the entire program should federal monies cease to exist. However, there is a reluctance on the part of the tribe to want to totally integrate itself into the state educational system

since the state lacks jurisdiction on the reservation. Therefore, taking these matters into consideration, the future operation of the Rocky Boy's School with its alternative route to reforming education cannot be guaranteed.

Some Problems of Staffing

A number of problems are always evident within a reservation school system. Two of these problems are: (1) the reservation, geographically and socially, offers very little to attract qualified teachers who wish to remain with the system for a few years; and (2) most non-Indian teachers come ill-prepared to teach Indian children. Most reservations attract the first year teacher who wants to get a start in his/her teaching profession, remains about two years, quickly tires of the isolation and hardships imposed by the reservation, and then leaves. This inexperienced teacher of Indian children usually comes with good intentions but is ill-prepared to meet the unique and individual cultural needs of Indian children. Cultural shock is a common experience for these teachers and their inability to understand, communicate, or cope with the situation often leads to frustration resulting in ineffective teaching. The teachers, though no fault of their own, are products of the middle class white value system of higher education which has little value among Indians and does not provide experiences and courses dealing specifically with the education of Indian children. Therefore, who is to decide the training needs of these first year teachers under these circumstances? At the Rocky Boy's School it has been the school administration and school board.

Recognizing that within the Indian community there is a vast untapped resource of teacher material, a plan was developed whereby those adults who expressed an interest to further their education were recruited into a locally

based teacher education training program. In addition to direct parent involvement, this program is designed to offer regular teacher preparation courses in elementary education eventually leading to a four year degree while also offering the practical experiences of working as a teacher assistant on a day to day basis and under a regular classroom environment. Since 1970 there has been approximately twenty-five Indians and one non-Indian graduate from this program. The teacher training program was initially funded by the Career Opportunity Program and is presently financed by a state higher education grant and by the Johnson O'Malley Act. Under the Johnson O'Malley Act, the Indian teacher training program was funded under the category of special programs which is designed to benefit Indian children in a unique way. Aside from the many other benefits and its implications for the future, students received an immediate benefit in that they have access to a Native adult person in the classroom. The long range objective of this program was to graduate local Native speaking peoples who would either immediately or subsequently return to the Rocky Boy's School to teach or serve in supervisory or administrative capacities. Of the twenty six graduates, thirteen have either served or are presently serving in professional capacities within the school. It is highly unlikely that so many Indians in this community would have become so successful within the relatively short time without Indian parent involvement and local control of education.

As a plan to improve local input in education matters and the retention of professional staff, the school board and administration believe and recognize that this locally based teacher education training program fulfills one of the most important needs of a community such as Rocky Boy, not only in terms of involvement and the overall increase in educational attainment, but the increase in the overall economic situation has also been evident.

Hopefully, the teacher turnover problem which has traditionally been caused by the relatively isolated location of the reservation, cultural adjustments, and a few other reasons will be resolved within a few years through the hiring of local elementary education teachers. It is neither the wish of the school board and the administration nor the community to hire all Indian teachers and other personnel for this would defeat a segment of the philosophy which takes into consideration the 'equal emphasis of the American way of life.'

Effect of Indian Control

Under the traditional middle-class white value education system of the previous district, problems such as great distances in bussing, poor attendance, curriculum not conducive to learning, and the lack of Indian parental involvement in the district all contributed to the necessity for realignment of school district boundaries. With such a request initiated on behalf of Indian people by Indian people, the argument for community control of education should be placed in its proper perspective. When whites and other affluent societies demand community control, it has been regarded as logical, normal and appropriate, but once poor people or a minority group begins to talk about control, people begin to see some dark and devious plot being concocted by militants and revolutionaries.[9] Using Rocky Boy's Elementary School as an example of schools controlled by Indians, they have demonstrated that Indians are capable of success when given the opportunity. Some reasons for success can be traced to the fact that parents have a direct input into education, curriculum design, and an influence in policy-making decisions.

During the early stages of Indian control there was the need to design and implement modes of instruction for the individual student rather than for

the entire class. This resulted in mobilizing all available school and community resources through an organized effort which would assist every child to realize his maximum potential and improve his motivation to learn resulting in a higher degree of success and achievement. The need for a relevant curriculum and a broad range of evaluative criteria for diagnosing academic, social and physical strengths and weaknesses of the children was obvious. Because of cultural biases it was also realized that records and scores on standardized tests, commercial reading programs, and achievement tests administered to their children were not indicative of the child's true academic potential. Therefore, curriculum based on local and more immediate concerns of students was and continues to be developed at the Rocky Boy's School by staff, students, and parents. An example of this input is the culturally developed flora project directed by a science instructor with major technical assistance stressing cultural significance coming from a large number of elders and students. Curriculum guides for each of the major instructional areas have been developed which unites the traditional subject matter with the cultural background of the Chippewa and Cree Tribes as well as tribes of Montana and other parts of the country.

Summary and Conclusion

In summary this paper has attempted to focus on some issues of educational alternatives as it applies to local Indian control of the educational system, its advantages to the Indian parent and child, and some constraints of local control. It has also attempted to examine what this has all meant to a people who have for many years been forced to take a back seat.

The problems encountered in governing an educational system under the condition reflected by the Rocky Boy's situation have resulted in new

challenges for the Indian people at Rocky Boy. These are the problems associated with its relationships to state and federal agencies; difficulties in financing an educational system and its total reliance on state and federal subsidies for its existence; problems of trying to retain good teachers for more than one or two years; and problems encountered in developing a curriculum which is conducive to a good learning environment and is relevant to the needs and desires of the Indian child. Rocky Boy's locally based teacher education training program, its inservice education program, bicultural program, and the school-community relationships, all having resulted from an ingenious administration, play a major role in the philosophy which includes biculturalism, the learning of the academic skills and the preparation of young Indian children for the world of work either within or outside the reservation.

It is important for Rocky Boy's school officials to consider an evaluation of their total operation which will, I am sure, show the many positive results that have occurred since 1970. When such an evaluation is concluded it will have demonstrated that the increase in the educational level of its people is directly related to the extent of active participation by Indian parents into the decisions that affect their children.

For those people who know about Rocky Boy, its system of operation must be viewed as a model for the education of the student and the adult, not only in terms of Indian people but to the extent that much can be learned from them by those outside the arena of Indian education. Its innovations and reforms in education which have taken place within the short six year infancy period have led many interested educators and non-educators to the halls, classrooms, and playgrounds of the school. As Royal B. Hassrick, a member of

the National Indian Arts and Crafts Board and one of the two spokesmen for the board, explained in his visit to the school in 1976:

> "What is being done at Rocky Boy is most significant and is something the Bureau of Indian Affairs in its schools has never quite got around to. Giving Indian children a pride of heritage is the essence of education for them. I was impressed and the board was impressed by the fact we saw happy faces at Rocky Boy School. These kids are enthusiastic. I've been to enough Indian schools to know that Indian schools are not noted for providing this kind of thing--this happiness and enthusiasm. It obviously must have something to do with the operations there. . ."10

While the educational approach and the curriculum have given flexibility to learning, its school-community relations has helped to focus on the child in giving him/her a feeling that he/she is an integral and worthwhile member of the school and community. The underlying concept in this approach is that quality of education for them is inherently connected with the degree to which the education system is a part of the social system of the community.

Of the Indian parents whose children attend Rocky Boy's School, they have found that obtaining control is not a panacea or a key to automatic educational miracles. But most agree that things are much better than they ever were. Because of all this, the parents have a sense of community control in which they can and do influence policy-making in their children's school in ways beneficial to their children. And that's important!

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